

PROTECTIVE BODY ARMOR



FUNCTION CODE: 413

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10-16-00

Contents:

- I. Policy
- II. Type of Armor **and Accessories** Provided
- III. Wearing of the Armor
- IV. ***Procedure for Reissue of Secondary Protective Body Armor***
- V. Maintenance and Care Instructions
- VI. ***Repairs and Alterations***
- VII. Supervisor's Responsibility
- VIII. Proponent Unit
- IX. Cancellation
- Appendix A: MCP 559, "Soft Body Armor Inspection Schedule"

I. Policy

The department's policy is to provide each officer with protective soft body armor and encourage officers to wear it at all times while on duty, however, the wearing of the armor is not mandatory. Although officers are not required to wear their armor, they will be held accountable for the proper maintenance of this important piece of equipment. ***It is also the policy of the department to ensure that law enforcement officers, who are called upon to act in an official capacity while off-duty, are afforded protection against harmful attack. Therefore, the department will maintain its practice of replacing primary protective body armor according to manufacturer's recommendations and permitting officers the option of voluntarily using the reissued protective body armor, primarily while off-duty. Animal Control Officers assigned to the Animal Services Division will also be issued protective soft body armor.*** CALEA 41.3.5)

II. Type of Armor **and Accessories** Provided

- A. The department currently provides each officer with protective soft body armor. ***This body armor:***
 - 1. Provides Threat Level II protection.
 - 2. ***Consists of a front and rear ballistic panel encased in a water repellant nylon cover.***
 - 3. ***Has a removable 5"X8" soft trauma plate.***
 - 4. Is individually made to fit each officer's measurements. Officers are cautioned not

to exchange armor with other officers for this reason.

- B. ***Two white washable sleeve carriers are issued with the panel and are designed to be worn under the uniform shirt.***

- C. ***Each officer will also receive a black quilted vest carrier with the Montgomery County Police badge patch sewn on the upper left pocket. Animal Control Officers from the Animal Services Division will receive the Animal Control patch. The panels are placed inside this carrier which is designed to be worn over the uniform shirt.***

III. Wearing of the Armor

- A. The department does not require officers to wear the department issued armor, however, it is strongly recommended and encouraged that officers do so whenever they are on duty.
- B. ***How to Assemble the Body Armor***
 - 1. ***The ballistic panels fit into the carriers.***
 - 2. ***There is a pouch located on the upper mid-section of the front ballistic panel to accommodate the 5"X8" insert. It should be worn in conjunction with the ballistic panel facing away from the body.***
 - 3. ***The white carriers are to be worn under the uniform shirt. Always wear the vest with the side panels exaggerated into the armpits. Line the elastic up so it comes straight across the chest. Worn properly, the vest will rest in the proper position to protect the heart and lung area. In the seated position the vest should just clear the duty belt and have no more than one half inch gap between the side and rear panels. The vest should have no more than a one inch gap above the belt line when sitting.***
 - 4. The black vest is designed to be worn over the uniform shirt. ***The panels are taken out of the white carrier and placed in the black vest carrier. The vest should be worn in the same manner as described in B.3, above.***

The wearing of the black nylon vest as an outer garment is not permitted, except when in a building or when faced with exigent circumstances. Once the danger has passed, officers will comply with the procedures outlined above.

IV. Procedure for Reissue of Secondary Protective Body Armor

Officers may, at their option, retain their issued body armor when it is replaced according to the manufacturer's recommendations. This body armor will be known as "secondary protective body armor." The secondary protective body armor is primarily for use off-duty, to protect officers against harmful attack. The following guidelines will apply:

- 1. Officers will continue to wear the primary protective body armor while on duty.*
- 2. If the officer chooses to retain the secondary protective body armor, the officer will be given an MCP 413, "Secondary Body Armor Reissue Notice." The officer will be asked to acknowledge receipt of the reissue notice by way of a signature on the notice.*
- 3. The serial number of the secondary protective body armor will be recorded on the MCP 413 and will be retained in the Central Supply Section.*
- 4. Prior to reissue, the secondary protective body armor will be inspected by the officer who retains the vest for obvious signs of wear, tear, abuse, deterioration, and proper fit.*
- 5. If the inspection finds the secondary protective body armor to be unsuitable for reissue, the officer will relinquish the body armor to the Central Supply Section.*
- 6. This policy does not create an entitlement to secondary protective body armor. It is intended to permit the reissue of protective body armor subject to the conditions set forth in this directive, and at the discretion of the Chief of Police.*
- 7. The secondary protective body armor remains the property of the Montgomery County Department of Police and officers are therefore responsible for its proper care and security.*
- 8. Upon separation from the department, or upon request, officers will relinquish any and all protective body armor assigned to them.*

- 9. In no event will an officer be permitted to retain any protective body armor which is more than 10 years old.*

V. Maintenance and Care Instructions

A. To launder the outer shell/carrier:

- 1. Remove ballistic panels from the front and back of the vest carrier.*
- 2. Keep the vest carrier clean. Perspiration will weaken the fibers. Launder the carriers on a regular basis. Hand washing is preferable or the carrier can be automatic machine washed using only the "Gentle" cycle in cold water.*
- 3. Do not use bleach.*
- 4. The carrier should be line dried but may be tumble dried at medium temperature. The lining may shrink if it is dried too long or at high temperatures.*
- 5. The carrier must be completely dry before inserting the ballistic panels.*

B. To clean the ballistic panels:

- 1. Never submerge the ballistic panels in water. Hand wash by gently wiping with a sponge or wash cloth using a mild detergent. Wipe off any excess detergent with clean water, using the same procedure as above.*
- 2. Never hang the body armor on a coat hanger. Always lay the vest flat when not wearing. Lay the body-side up to allow armor to air dry between wearing and laundering.*

VI. Repairs and Alterations

A. Any alteration of the ballistic panels, or the

placement of the ballistic panels in any cover other than that provided, will render the warranty null and void.

B. If the covering is torn or if the armor is subject to any abuse or misuse, the warranty is null and void.

C. If any part of the ballistic panel is torn or damaged, return the armor to the Central

Supply Section for repair or possible replacement.

- D. *Should the primary or secondary protective body armor sustain damage during a confrontation, return the armor with a statement and/or a copy of the related police report describing how the damage occurred to the Central Supply Section for replacement. While this procedure applies to reissued secondary protective body armor, the secondary protective body armor will not be replaced at that time.*

VII. Supervisor's Responsibility

- A. To ensure that the department's protective soft body armor is properly maintained and cared for, supervisors will conduct quarterly (every three months based on a calendar year) inspections of the **primary protective body armor** assigned to personnel under their command. The quarterly physical inspection of the armor's components may identify any possible deficiencies or damage that would impair the effectiveness of the armor to perform up to its designed capabilities. Any identified defect will be repaired or replaced to restore the armor to the proper safety level.
- B. Furthermore, district and unit commanders may conduct periodic inspections **of the primary protective body armor** at their discretion. **The ballistic panels of the protective soft body armor** are backed by a five year performance/product liability warranty, however, the quarterly inspections will be conducted on a continuous basis as long as the armor is issued to an officer.
- C. Supervisors will use the MCP 559, "Soft Body Armor Inspection Schedule," provided for each officer (see Appendix A). Supervisors will follow the instructions posted on the inspection form. The inspection form will be kept in the individual officer's personnel file located at the officer's duty assignment. Whenever an officer is transferred, the inspection form will automatically be sent along with the officer to the new duty assignment.

VIII. Proponent Unit: Management and Budget Division

IX. Cancellation

This directive cancels Function Code 305.C, effective date 08-15-91.

Charles A. Moose, Ph.D.
Chief of Police

